

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

1/6 Marines deliver less-than-lethal punch

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. (Sept. 29, 2003) — In order to provide the Marines and sailors of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit with the knowledge and skills to properly deal with angry crowds during conflicts in urban areas, approximately 400 members of the unit have recently undergone a Non-Lethal Weapons and Tactics Course here.

The course, taught by the II Marine Expeditionary Force’s Special Operations Training Group, teaches a variety of crowd management skills that can be employed when a verbal warning is not enough and a bullet is too much. Topics covered during the course include how to spot and counter aggressive behavior, self-defense techniques, how to conduct vehicle and personnel searches, the use of road-blocks, and the employment of pepper spray and non-lethal impact munitions.

Staff Sgt. Ronald E. Parrish Jr., an instructor for the course, said his most difficult task is to take the Marines out of the “war-fighter” mode.

As a caveat to being taught the value of non-lethal weapons, the Marines were reminded that non-lethal weapons are not a substitute for deadly force and are used proportionately to the threat they are facing. These rules were hammered home repeatedly throughout the course, and at a rules of engagement class.

The course was offered to the MEU twice, and the unit took full advantage of the opportunity, sending a rifle company and the artillery battery from its ground combat element, Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn., 6th Marines. According to Gunnery Sgt. William R. Frye, company gunnery sergeant for BLT 1/6’s artillery battery, the course is an integral part of their pre-deployment training.

The culminating event of the two-week course is a two-day training exercise that pits the students against unruly mobs (played by other Marines) at Camp Lejeune’s urban combat training facility, also known as “combat town.”

Sgt. Maj. returns to stomping grounds

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. — The 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, John L. Estrada, returned “home” to Miramar on Sept. 22 to pay a visit to his Marines.

“It’s good to be home,” said Estrada, who spoke to a packed house in the station theater. “Miramar will always be home to me, and I want you to know that I’m very proud to be known as coming from this air station.”

More than 1,500 Marines crowded into the theater to listen to the sergeant major talk about topics ranging from Operation Iraqi Freedom and promotions to the state of the Marine Corps as a whole. He spoke for about 45 minutes and ended the session by giving Marines the opportunity to ask him questions or voice their concerns.

Estrada opened his speech by thanking all of the Marines for their efforts in OIF. The sergeant major then focused his attention on three subjects: safety, professional military education, and leadership.

“Our safety record is horrible,” said Estrada. “Marines are not known for bringing up the rear in anything, but we are behind every other service when it comes to safety. When I have to do the political thing in Washington D.C., I love to speak about the Marines in combat, or how successful we are in training our recruits. But I get embarrassed every time I have to speak about our safety record and I want that to change.”

Estrada also mentioned that he is doing all he can to try and make resi-

See what you do is ...



Sgt. Bradly Shaver

Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa – Marines from Mike Co., Task Force Rawhide, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism) and soldiers from 3rd platoon, Charlie Company, 10th Mountain Division, train alongside French Forces Djibouti and Djiboutian Armed Forces during a live-fire training exercise Sept. 24, that included helicopter operations to strengthen relations between three countries.

dent PME a requirement for all sergeants and above.

When speaking on the topic of leadership in the Marine Corps, Estrada held nothing back when challenging his Staff NCOs and NCOs to play a bigger role in their Marines’ lives. The sergeant major also touched on how well retention is going in the Marine Corps and spoke at length on the importance of sergeants and staff sergeants applying for special duties.

History buffs re-enact battle of Iwo Jima

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — A group of Camp Pendleton volunteers showed off their stripes with a few stars to honor the Pledge of Allegiance in the Hollywood Hills Sept. 17 as part of a simultaneous, nationwide celebration of Constitution Day.

Volunteers from U.S. Marine Corps Historical Company at Camp Pendleton re-enacted the Iwo Jima flag-raising for Los Angeles school children during “Pledge Across America.” The event also commemorated two other memorable flag-raisings in our nation’s history: the first walk on the moon and the first flag-raising after Sept. 11, 2001, at Ground Zero in New York.

The event began with speeches from actor Ernest Borgnine, a World War II veteran and Oscar winner, as well as astronaut Air Force Col. Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin Jr., a Korean War veteran and second man to walk on the moon. The ceremony culminated with President George W. Bush leading the nation in the Pledge of Allegiance via live television.

Staff Sgt. Steven C. Sullivan headed up the group of Marines who performed the Mount Suribachi flag-raising skit. He’s a Marine academic specialist at Camp Pendleton’s School of Infantry and volunteers with the historical company.

“I know as much about my M-1 Garand as I do about my M-16,” said Sullivan, referring the standard service rifle Marines used during World War II and the one they use now, respectively. “You get into it to the point where I’m wearing white socks. During World War II, we didn’t have green socks. The only reason I’m wearing a green T-shirt is because on Iwo they were just coming out with them.”

The Marines spent hours after the ceremony answering questions and signing autographs for children, as well

as sharing memories with veterans.

Children from area schools performed and sang songs about the Constitution, along with hymns of all five Armed Services combined as the “Military Medley.” The two flag-raising ceremonies were preformed as the President led the children in the Pledge of Allegiance. Three members of the Los Angeles Fire Department who helped with rescue efforts at Ground Zero in New York City raised the American flag in representation of Sept. 11. Marines and a corpsman from the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Company memorialized the historic flag-raising on Iwo Jima.

Corps replaces sniper rifle with new weapon

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — The Marine Corps has recently upgraded the old sniper rifle, the M-40A1, replacing it with a new and improved rifle.

The M-40A3 will fully replace the M-40A1 by October 2004, said Staff Sgt. Jesse L. Bier, the project and field officer with 1st Marine Division.

“Because of the fact only 30 rifles are produced every month, and with a limited amount of scopes, it’ll take a while to fully replace the old rifle,” Bier said.

Each rifle is hand-built by precision weapons repairmen at Weapons Training Battalion in Quantico, Va., according to Staff Sgt. James Knight, sniper section repairman at Weapons Training Battalion, Quantico, Va. Beir added that old rifles are being sent back to Quantico for disassembly.

The M-40A3 was tested in 1996 and was finally issued as an official Marine Corps weapon in 2000. During the rifle testing, surveys showed shooters enjoyed greater accuracy and increased comfort.

As with the M-40A1, the M-40A3 is a bolt-action, manually operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, shoulder-fired weapon with an optical scope. However, the M-40A3 has an adjustable cheek piece and recoil pad on the butt stock, giving the shooter the chance to position the weapon more comfortably.

“Unlike the M-40A1, the M-40A3 has a mount rail like the M-4, which allows you to attach different units to it,” said Sgt. Steven D. Lovell, team leader with 1st Recon Battalion’s B Company. The day scope allows a sniper to see up to 800 meters; the night scope allows 600 meters.

The rifle is built on a fiberglass stock with a stainless-steel barrel, a steel

floor plate and trigger-guard assembly. The magazine box holds five rounds. Additional enhancements include six quick-detach sling swivel mounts and a removable, swivel bipod. Still, the new rifle comes with one drawback—it’s heavier. The new rifle outweighs the old by two pounds.

Lieutenants train in aspects of war at IOC

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Despite the constant rain and dropping temperatures, Marines from the Infantry Officers Course assembled Sept. 12 for a training evolution around Quantico’s main side and Quantico Town.

The 34 Marines that took part in the 24-hour evolution were subject to scenarios that included a 100-person riot, questioning subjects, taking prisoners, identification checkpoints, house calls and patrols.

The Marines set up a perimeter around the Marine Security Guard Battalion building after patrolling through Quantico Town. They then established a base of operations inside MSG.

“They will be conducting hasty vehicle checkpoints, house calls and stuff along those lines,” said Capt. Michael N. Estes, infantry officer course instructor. “The purpose of the evolution is to allow the students to solve problems and deal with non-combatants.”

They will learn the various facets of war from full-blown, to raid, to dealing with a sniper and the possibility of having to do humanitarian relief-type missions, said Estes.

In addition to rioters, the lieutenants were introduced to “embedded reporters.” Three photographers and two reporters from area newspapers were sent along with the Marines during patrols. Patrols were conducted periodically after interviewing suspected aggressors. Once an aggressor came forward willing to give up information, the Marines passed on the information to the patrols around the base.

One squad of patrolling Marines came upon two rival groups of aggressors and incidentally came into fire with them. In the end, one Marine was injured and one aggressor was killed.

Camp Lejeune sailors win top dental honors

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — Two sailors from 2nd Dental Battalion, 2nd Force Service Support Group here,

were recognized by the Marine Corps Association for their significant contribution to Fleet Marine Force operational readiness at Building 2, Sept.12.

Petty Officer Third Class John C. Furr, dental technician, currently serving as administrations clerk, 2nd Dental Battalion Headquarters, received the Thomas A. Christiansen Memorial Award. Commander William R. Davidson, director of the Marine Corps Air Station New River branch dental clinic and oral surgery department head, from Little Field, Texas, received the Weedon E. Osborne Memorial Award.

Both awards are presented annually to dental sailors serving to promote the operational readiness of Marine units. Every year each of the three dental battalions that serve the Marine Corps submit nominations for their best officer and enlisted candidate to Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. Then there is a board to select the “best of the best,” said Navy Capt. William G. Reynolds, dental officer of the Marine Corps, Health Services, Headquarters Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps Association provides the awards and citations for the recipients.

Davidson, who has been in the Navy for nearly 13 years, received the officer’s award. Davidson, who did his undergraduate work at Austin, Texas, and did his dental work at Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas, was nominated for the award for his work with the Combined Medical Dental Detachment in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Furr, with eight years in the Navy, received the enlisted award. Having spent his entire career on “the green side” working with Marines in Okinawa, Japan, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and Camp Lejeune, N.C., Furr said he has “huge respect for Marines.”

Furr was nominated for his actions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. For part of his tour, he served as an ambulance driver with B Surgical Company.

HMH-772 hustles back to Pennsylvania

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION NEW RIVER, N.C. — Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-772 departed the air station to return home Sept 24. After an impressive year on active duty, the Marines returned to the joint reserve base Naval Air Station Willow Grove, Pa.

Since the “Hustlers” were activated in January 2002, they made history three separate times. First, they were a part of the largest Marine reserve component ever mobilized.

Once the 168 personnel arrived at the air station and were assigned to Marine Aircraft Group-29, they made history yet again when they were ordered to reinforce Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-263 as part of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

Another page was added to the history books when HMH-772 became the first reserve squadron to carry the coveted title of special operations capable.

The squadron was assigned in direct support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and in December 2002, Marines used to serving only one weekend a month and two weeks a year, were flying missions in Georgia, Kosovo, Djibouti and Bahrain.

As the Amphibious Ready Group divided and went to different parts of the world, the “Hustlers” helped prove the feasibility of split operations enhancing the response time of the heavy-lift assets.

Compiled by the MCRD Parris Island Public Affairs Office.

Security!...



Sgt. Jason Anderson

MCB Quantico, Va. – A role player is moved out of the street and led to a Medevac Humvee after being ‘shot’ during the Infantry Officers Course 24-hour training evolution course